

A Study on Family Adaptation and Social Adaptation in Blended Family - From the Perspective of Family Systems Theory

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Abstract: With the rapid development of society and the diversification of family structures, blended families have gradually become a common form of family in modern society. Due to factors such as the integration of Eastern and Western cultures, people's attitudes towards marriage have changed, and the phenomenon of marriage freedom is particularly evident. The divorce rate has shown a significant upward trend. The increase in the number of divorces has indirectly driven the growth of remarried and restructured families. Due to the restructuring, the original family structure has undergone changes, and the blended family faces many challenges, such as adaptation issues for children or families, economic pressure, emotional integration and trust building issues, role positioning and power distribution issues in the new family, cultural differences and integration issues, and so on. These issues can affect the functioning of the family, trigger parent-child problems, and thus reduce the overall happiness index of the family. Therefore, it is necessary to help blended families, provide comprehensive support and guidance to better adapt to the new family environment, establish harmonious and stable family relationships, maximize the positive functions of the family, and improve the happiness and sense of belonging of family members. This study is mainly based on the theory of family systems, with the reorganization of families as the research object, exploring the reasons for its formation, the problems and challenges faced by family education, and proposing corresponding coping strategies. The research results indicate that improving the family education model of blended families is beneficial for the growth of family members and the harmony of the family environment.

Keywords: Blended Families; Family Adaptation; Social Adaptation; Family

Members

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

In recent years, China's economy has developed rapidly, and social changes have been taking place with each passing day. People's traditional views on marriage have gradually shifted. The continuous increase in the divorce rate has also rewritten China's previous marital landscape. Divorced families often have needs for emotional transition, which has led to a growing number of blended family. At the same time, parent-child relationships in blended family have increasingly attracted public attention. While receiving social attention, they also face considerable pressure. For example, in certain social and cultural environments, blended family may be subject to a certain degree of discrimination and prejudice. Children may experience ridicule and exclusion from peers or other members of society, and parents may also feel social pressure and negative evaluation. All of these factors increase the difficulty for blended family. Therefore, mutual support and determination among family members are needed, as well as the promotion of mutual support among members of blended family and society's understanding and tolerance toward them.

1.2 Research Purpose and Significance

Compared with ordinary families, blended family are a relatively vulnerable family form with a more complex family structure, making them more difficult to manage than ordinary families. Family restructuring is complex. This complexity creates numerous conflicts within family interactions, particularly conflicts rooted in differing educational methods and beliefs, and stops families from performing their positive functions effectively. Thus, we need to examine blended families' challenges via family system theory. We can put forward targeted solutions to

boost family education quality, better family environments and raise family members' well-being.

This study adopts the perspectives of family systems theory to grasp the characteristics of parent-child relationships in such special families as blended family, and to explore the various relationship problems, causes, and coping styles that emerge in blended family. Implement social work interventions to help blended families establish a safe and stable family environment as well as healthy parent-child relationships under the guidance of family system theory. From a professional perspective, the conduct of this study will contribute to enriching the practical applications of family system theory. From a practical perspective, it helps enhance the stability and well-being of blended families, and enhance public awareness of blended families.

1.3 Literature Review

1.3.1 Domestic Research Status

Domestic research generally agrees that the structural characteristic of a blended family lies in the complexity of relationships among its members. Existing research tends to focus on parent-child interactions and communication difficulties, along with children's mental health conditions, social support networks, and their overall social adjustment within remarried families. It is believed that communication barriers exist in family member relationships under this structural model, which to a large extent leads to children's psychological problems-though there is not necessarily a causal relationship between the two. Relevant scholarly research has provided rich practical support for promoting blended family to improve their family environment and reintegrate into society.

1.3.2 International Research Status

Research outside China tends to focus more on the changing nature and stability of blended families. Interaction patterns among members and the gradual shifts in family structure over time are given greater attention. In addition, because cultural settings vary from one region to another, cross-cultural comparisons are often made. These studies look at how cultural factors shape family structure, parent-child ties, and the adjustment abilities of family members. Such work offers a new way to think about stepfamily research in practice. And some intervention aimed to improve family well-being, functioning,

and involvement by fostering shared understanding and challenging limiting beliefs.

1.3.3 Research Review

Through literature analysis, it is found that scholars have extensively discussed blended family from aspects such as influencing factors, social work intervention, and relationship improvement, with relatively rich research results. These have provided both a reference basis and a theoretical foundation for this study. However, among the notable achievements in related fields, there are still some deficiencies. For example, in terms of social attention, most researchers emphasize positive attention to blended family as a special group and hold the view that policy support should be provided. However, they overlook the fact that social attention from different perspectives may also bring certain pressures and challenges to blended family. This is precisely the value of this study.

At present, the number of blended family in China is increasing day by day. In the new family structure, family relationships are generally highly fragile and sensitive, and the various relationship coordination problems that emerge have become a common phenomenon in blended family. At the same time, blended family have a certain particularity compared with ordinary families. On the one hand, they receive social attention-this attention refers to the perception of special families as a "special group" in the public eye, and this impression carries negative connotations, which over time may form a "label." On the other hand, since the family is the basic unit of individual socialization, unless internal family conflicts intensify or conflicts extend outward causing adverse effects, they are difficult to detect. Therefore, the problems and difficulties faced within blended family are also concealed, and their needs are hard to be revealed.

1.4 Research Innovation

This study is based on systems theory and family systems theory. It not only explores the causes of problems in blended family but also places blended family within the broader social environment, considering multicultural factors according to actual conditions, and exploring the impact of society on this special group. Through social work intervention and support, it helps blended family overcome difficulties and improve the family ecological environment. It also contributes to strengthening the positive

attention of the state and society toward blended family, thereby adopting effective protective measures for them or forming relevant family education guidance regulations.

2. Difficulties and Challenges Faced by blended family

2.1 Family Adaptation Problems

Blended family face a series of family adaptation problems, including family members' adjustment issues, family economic pressure, the establishment of emotional integration and trust among members, family role positioning and power distribution, and cultural differences and integration between the two families.

Blended families bring big changes to all family members, especially children. They have to leave their original family structure behind. They need to accept new family members. They also must adapt to a brand-new home environment. During this process, family members may feel anxious and uneasy, find it difficult to understand and adapt to these changes, and even trigger serious psychological problems.

Blended families have many duties, such as raising children and supporting elderly parents. They face more financial pressure than ordinary families. If both parents have children, they face emotional changes and practical living problems. Household expenses cover daily living and education costs, and these expenditures are bound to double. Big differences in their finances may cause conflicts and dissatisfaction. In blended family, each member may carry some emotional baggage and pain from the past. Therefore, building lasting emotional bonds and trust takes much time and effort within blended families. This process is highly complicated. External systems can offer intervention support. More importantly, all family members need to take the initiative to heal their emotional wounds, thus establish intimate relationships with new members, and strive to accept and adapt to the new family environment in the future life.

Blended family members may hold different cultural backgrounds. They can differ in beliefs, religions, customs, eating habits and languages. They also keep different levels of contact with former partners. All these differences create great challenges for every person in the blended family. It is easy for couples to disagree on how to share resources for their kids. They may also argue because they have different ideas about

education. They need to talk openly and understand each other. They should find a way that both of them agree on to stop emotional fights.

2.2 Social Adaptation Problems

As a structurally special family model, blended family have certain particularities compared with ordinary families. With the opening up of society and the transformation of public attitudes toward marriage, family structures have shown a trend toward diversification, and blended family have gradually been accepted and recognized by society. Nevertheless, certain inexplicable social prejudices still exist. The public may view blended family with a biased perspective and attach derogatory labels such as "divorced with children" to some members of blended family. However, it should be clarified that statements of objective facts should not carry positive or negative connotations. Precisely because of such biased attitudes, blended family in difficulty are discouraged from seeking help. The problems and difficulties they face are concealed, and their needs are difficult to bring to light. This is a manifestation of the labeling and solidification of blended family in difficulty, and their members' social adaptation falls into a predicament.

3. Coping Strategies

Blended family must adapt to the new family environment. Firstly, family members should promote communication and exchange, actively and candidly expressing their thoughts and feelings. Effective communication can enhance mutual understanding, and reduce conflicts and misunderstandings. Secondly, family members should provide their children with sufficient companionship and understanding, and actively pay attention to their emotional needs. Through equal dialogue, parents guide their children to face reality, let them understand the truth behind the breakdown of their original family, and seek their forgiveness. At the same time, family members can establish clear family rules and values, as well as define the roles and responsibilities of each member. Additionally, financial budgets should be established in blended families. By properly managing household expenses, emotional conflicts arising from financial issues can be minimized. When blended families encounter significant difficulties during the adaptation process, they

may seek assistance from professionals to better adapt to the new family environment.

A social support network is crucial for the stable and harmonious development of blended family. blended family face diverse difficulties and challenges. We should give this group full understanding and tolerance, integrate multiple resources, strengthen social support and resource investment, improve legal and policy support, and fully consider cultural background factors. We should also increase public awareness and publicity about this group so that social labels can be weakened or even removed. At the same time, blended family need to adapt to changes in social life, view their own potential and resources from a strengths-based perspective, and obtain social support through multiple channels such as relatives and friends, community organizations, and other means.

4. Conclusion

According to the relevant results published in China's Ministry of Civil Affairs' "Statistical Bulletin on Social Development," against the backdrop of a continuous decline in marriage registrations, the total number of divorces and remarriages has nearly doubled over the past decade. Traditional marriage concepts have changed, leading to a steady increase in blended family. As an important component of diverse families, blended family need to receive understanding and support from society. This study mainly draws on the perspective, connotations, and framework of family systems theory, takes blended family as the research object, explores the difficulties and causes they face, and explores effective paths to optimize the stepfamily environment. The aim is to foster positive interactions among their family members, improve household environments, boost social integration, help blended families address hardships, and fully realize healthy family functioning.

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